of teachers, introduction of teaching practices that make class rooms more joyful and attractive, regular academic support to teachers etc. On the other had, several interventions aim at improving the demand for schooling through community mobilization, special intervention for enrolment and retention of vulnerable groups of children including girls and children of weaker sections. Measures are also being undertaken to strengthen the accountability of the schools system towards parents and the community, The Mid-Day Meal Scheme that provides a cooked meal to all children of primary schools and alternative education centres has also helped in checking drop-out rates.

Free textbooks are provided to all girls and all SC and ST students up to the elementary stage. Under the National Programme for Education of Girls of the Elementary Level (NPEGEL), additional resources are provided to 3164 educationally backward blocks for interventions of community mobilization, bridge course for out-of-school girls, strengthening of model cluster schools, gender sensitization of teachers etc. to promote retention of girls in primary and upper primary schools.

Assistance to States under mid-day meal scheme

1380. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to increase the Central assistance to States and Union Territories for the Centrally sponsored national programme on mid-day meal scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether all the State Governments/NGOs giving mid-day meals are complying with the norms of mid-day meal scheme;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether Government have taken note of the complaints received in the implementation of the scheme; and

(f) if so, the action taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Central Government, in June, 2006 has decided to enhance the cooking cost norm from existing Re. 1 per child per school

day to Rs. 1.50 subject to mandatory contribution of minimum fifty paisa by States and UTs to reach and the overall cost norm of Rs. 2. For the States of North-Eastern Region, the Central assistance would be Rs. 1.80 per child per school day with mandatory minimum contribution of twenty paisa by them.

In addition to the above, where convergence with other programmes is not feasible, assistance for construction of kitchen-cum-store and cooking/kitchen devices would be provided from the funds of the Scheme.

(c) and (d) The State Governments have been requested to immediately revise the cooking cost norm and provide necessary funds in the State Budget to meet their share.

(e) and (f) A few complaints, mostly featured in the newspapers, have come to the notice of the Government about inferior quality/unhygienic food and irregular supply of mid-day meal. As the scheme is implemented through State Governments, they have been continuously exhorted to give full attention to the issue of quality and regular supply. A new initiative has been launched w.e.f. 1.1.06 to mobilize mothers to take turns to oversee preparation of meal and feeding of children.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as source of earning for NGOs

†1381. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has become a source of earning a huge amount for Non-Governmental Organisations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the children being educated under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan; and

(d) whether Government are having full information regarding the amount spent to educate one lakh children; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.